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unearthed minus an arm or two, and placed in the great art gallery of the time to be admired of all beholders, and perhaps files of our daily papers will be cited to show how in this nineteenth century the whole man was cultivated until approximate perfection was reached in the type thus wonderfully preserved by the sculptor's art.

ADRIAN REXFORD.

VII.

PERNICIOUS LITERATURE.

THE evils which affect our political system are but the natural results of the corruption of society and the individual members of the body politic. In all of our great cities are localities which are the breeding places of crime—cess-pools toward which the vice of the surrounding country drains—and from these sinks of iniquity arise the poisons which eat out the moral life of the nation. Broadcast over the land—thick as dead leaves blown by the autumn winds—fly printed leaves from the tree of evil knowledge. In them crimes are gilded; lawlessness is valor; murderers, thieves, and criminals are the heroes. The man, or woman, or child who peruses them, goes to the State prison, the gambling house and the brothel to find the companions of his leisure hours, the personages who will dwell in his thoughts when his hands are busy. Courage, independence, heroism, and a spirit of self-sacrifice are qualities which have become antiquated and obsolete. Argosies of fancy and of fact, which wove spells of tenderness and honor around the lives of the great and good men and women of times gone by, have been allowed to go down into the abyss of out-of-print; and in their stead we have a Babel of dialects, a hodge-podge of criminals and detectives, a pemmican of adventure—bear and Indian and scout and trapper and cow-boy boiled down to the dregs of condensation.

All the quaintness and innocence of childhood—its originality—its tenderness—its sprightly tricks—its infinite, unconscious drollery—the serious earnestness of its fun—the natural religion of its plays—the delicious oddity of its sayings—all, all disappear when the child has fed its mind upon that pernicious literature which the great cities spread over the country.

It is next to impossible to reform those who have lost all faith in the sincerity, honor, or goodness of human nature—who believe that people in general are all bad, who have been taught that all criminals are heroes. In such hearts there is a reservoir of rage and vice, invisible save when some flame, hotter than usual, bursts momentarily forth. And if our national life is growing worse, if society is growing more corrupt, it is because our young men and women, who are entering into manhood and womanhood, have, in childhood, fed their minds on pernicious literature.

Childhood is the time when the ideals of life are formed. In the dreams of childhood are found the germs of many a man's career. The seeds sown in the mind of the child will germinate into the character of the man and ripen into the pleasant fruit of good deeds or the Dead-Sea-apples of sin. And so, if we would have citizens capable, by voice and vote, of wisely governing and directing the affairs of the nation, we must see to it that the children of the land are early taught to be manly and honest, pure and true.

But, apart from these considerations of the worldly power and prosperity of the nation, there is a higher duty which we are called upon to fulfill—a duty whose performance or omission must be accounted for when the great Judge of all men puts to us the question, “Where is thy brother!” Think you that the old, old answer with which humanity has so long stifled its conscience will suffice then? Shall we be absolved from blame if we give the answer of Cain, “Am I my brother's keeper!” When eyeballs glaze and ears grow dull—when the golden

cord that binds the soul and body together is frayed and breaking, and life is ebbing away—what will it matter to us then that we have been clad daintily, that Science has been our guide, or that Art has surrounded our lives with all that is fair and pleasant? Better far, if out of the darkness of the Valley of the Shadow of Death we hear a voice speaking to us words like these: “ Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

ARTHUR DUDLEY VINTON.

VIII.

COLONEL INGERSOLL ON CHRISTIANITY.

COLONEL INGERSOLL’s opinion of Christ is, of course, of great value to the world but it would have been in better taste had he trusted to his admirers to draw the comparison with which he favors us when he applies to Christ words ostensibly quoted from some attack upon himself. Christ was indeed also a “ reformer ” and an “ infidel,” but there was nothing “ cruel in his treatment of the belief of others.”

It is there that the resemblance ends.

Christ, indeed, came “ not to bring peace but a sword.” He did most truly war against the belief of others with a calm persistence that bespoke his high purpose; but it was not to throw down their gods and leave their temples desolate; to overthrow the result of ages of groping for the cause of things and leave the world helpless, like a child crying in the dark. If he destroyed their gods it was to give them that which symbolized more adequately the Truth,—that is, the Power of the Spirit. More than that, he was too wise a teacher to attempt, witness his own words quoted by John (chap. xvi.), “ I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.”

In his day the world had outgrown the purely sensuous religion of the Greeks, and a glimmer of the possibility of a spiritual side to man’s nature had begun to break through the aura of popular thought. Yet, because men had found their feet was not to him a reason for leaving them in their weakness to learn the way alone. Instead of that support they had outgrown he gave another, lest they should faint and fall by the way. He never said, “ There is no God,” but, there is but one God in whom is all the power of your many gods vested.

For the Jew, who already had the revelation, he carried it a step further when he declared the right of all men to salvation, and for all he prepared the way for the evolution of the whole Truth by giving to the world precepts whose practice would serve to subordinate the brute side of man’s nature and foster the spiritual side, through which only can the truth be perceived. It is by symbols that we learn; it is by faintly realized ideals that we form new ones. If the gifted Colonel would but remember that the world is yet young, that it needs still its pictures and its stories of its Bayards and its Richard of the Lion Heart—although the period of Santa Claus and the ogres and the fairy prince have been outgrown—to help it to believe in the truth of those ideals which it evolves as its grows, each purer than the last!

Let him remember that he and others like him, to whom has been vouchsafed the comprehension of a portion of the truth, bear the same relation to their fellows as the Jews to the Pagans. Let him, then, have patience with those who creep because he can walk erect. Let him imitate the man he professes to admire, and if he has a better crutch to give the man who limps along the path that he has come, let him give it him in the name of mercy; but let him stay his hand from breaking that which serves, however inadequately, to help the wretch to gain that point where his weakness and deformity may be changed to strength.

L. R. ZERBE.